Museums as places of 'Community Healing' - Post Covid-19

- The pandemic has instigated deep reflection on the nature of society and community

- What role then might museums have in regenerating 'communities' after Covid-19?

- Places of social renewal?

- How can we harness an engaged, responsive and participatory museum service?

Using Artefacts & Narrative for Healing

Narrative approaches like storytelling potentially promote the re-invigoration of communities and senses of belonging.

Challenges:

- How do we ensure all voices are heard?

- Do we need to re-consider our collecting policies to allow us to explore this?

Museums as Reflective & Supportive Wellbeing Spaces

Mindful reflection and self-care could be explored in museums using virtual, video and digital guided practice to underpin this role of the 'sanctuary space'.

Challenges:

- How do we continue to maintain an experience for a for a visitor to 'explore freely'?

- How do we actually promote wellbeing in the community if restrictions mean we can't totally be together?

- How do we draw on the digital knowledge gained during Covid-19 without compromising in-person experiences?
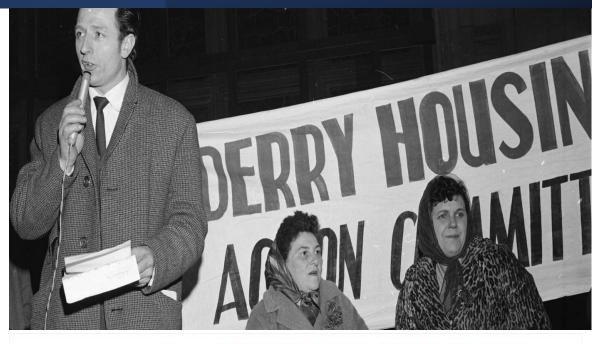
Recognising Museums as Social Justice Settings

Closer working between heritage and community organisations. The knowledge base of both can complement each other's core roles in moving out of the pandemic.

Challenges:

- Partnership working is challenging because of resourcing

- Organisational priorities

- Promoting mutual benefit and success of past activities

Museums, Crisis & Covid-19
Vitality and Vulnerabilities

Research Aim

- Identify & recommend how the Northern Ireland museum sector can drive best pratice in adapting its audience engagement in response to Covid-19
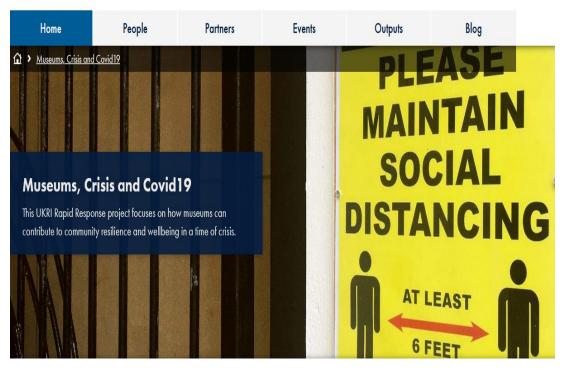
Objectives

1. Critically evaluate how museums nationally & internationally have adapted their pedagogy and pratices in response to Covid-19 and how the most effective of those can be sustained for immediate and long-term

2. Investigate possibilities for digital adaptation and innovation of museum projects focusing on community, learning and outreach

3. Consider the impact of Covid-19 on mental health and wellbeing and investigate the offer museums in Northern Ireland and elsewhere can make to support community resilience

https://www.ulster.ac.uk/museumscovid19